

Message Text

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PAGE 01 OUAGAD 04039 161706Z
ACTION PM-04

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FM AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2895
INFO USDAO ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
USDAO DAKAR
USCINCEUR VAHINGEN (J4/J7)

C O N F I D E N T I A L OUAGADOUGOU 4039

CINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, UV
SUBJECT: LETTER FROM PRESIDENT LAMIZANA ON MILITARY EQUIPMENT

REF: OUAGADOUGOU 3991

1. FOLLOWING

IS FREE TRANSLATION OF LETTER DATED DECEMBER 14, 1976,
ADDRESSED TO THE AMBASSADOR BY PRESIDENT LAMIZANA.

2. QUOTE: FOLLOWING THE DISCUSSIONS THAT YOU HAD ON DECEMBER 13
WITH THE HEAD OF THE COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF LOGISTICS PROBLEMS,
I HEREBY BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE LIST OF MATERIAL AND EQUIP-
MENT REPRESENTING THE ESSENTIAL MINIMUM FOR AN APPROPRIATE DEFENSE
OF MY COUNTRY.

MY GOVERNMENT REMAINS FIRMLY FAITHFUL TO ITS POLICY OF PEACE AND
BROTHERLY RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS OF THE WORLD AND IN PARTICULAR
WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES SURROUNDING UPPER VOLTA BECAUSE IT IS
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PAGE 02 OUAGAD 04039 161706Z

CONVINCED THAT NO DEVELOPMENT EFFORT IS POSSIBLE AND FEASIBLE
IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF INSECURITY.
UP TO LAST YEAR, WE THOUGHT THAT ALL OUR NEIGHBORS SHARED
THE SAME IDEAL OF PEACE AND THE SAME CONVICTION AND THAT, IN
CONSEQUENCE, WE COULD DEVOTE THE MAIN PART OF OUR RESOURCES AND
OUR ENERGIES TO PROMOTE OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

THE RECENT DIFFICULTIES CAUSED BY THE AMBITIONS OF OUR NEIGHBORS BRING US BACK TO A MORE REALISTIC VISION AND FORCE US TO CONSIDER A FEW ELEMENTARY PRECAUTIONS TO COUNTERACT ANY CONTINGENCY AND REASSURE OUR POPULATION. WE WANT PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS PRE-SUPPOSES BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF PRESERVING OUR EXISTENCE THROUGH OUR OWN MEANS OF COURSE, BUT ALSO WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF OUR TRUE FRIENDS IN CASE OF NEED. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT I ADDRESS TO YOU THIS REQUEST IN THE HOPE THAT YOU WILL UNDERTAKE ALL THE NECESSARY STEPS TO APPROACH YOUR GOVERNMENT IN ORDER THAT IT MIGHT HELP US BY PROVIDING THOSE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT TO RESTORE AND PRESERVE THE PEACE OF MIND OF OUR PEOPLE, THE FOREMOST REQUIREMENT TO ALL OUR DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. AS I HAVE ALREADY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT, CERTAIN MATERIALS AND PIECES OF EQUIPMENT REQUESTED WILL HELP TO SUPPORT THESE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS.

THIS IS THE CASE, IN PARTICULAR, OF THE C-130 AIRCRAFT WHICH WE WILL USE FOR THE TRAINING OF OUR AIRBORNE TROOPS AS WELL AS TO ANSWER EMERGENCY REQUESTS FOR TRANSPORT OF ECONOMIC GOODS, WHICH REQUESTS OUR NATIONAL SQUADRON IS FORCED TO REJECT FOR THE TIME BEING, DUE TO THE LACK OF A PLANE BUILT FOR SUCH OPERATIONS. THE PLANE AND ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES WHICH ARE MENTIONED HAVE ALREADY RENDERED SO MANY SERVICES IN THE FIELD OF THE ANTI-DROUGHT STRUGGLE THAT WE ARE SURE TO BE ABLE TO USE THEM IN BREEDING FROM ISOLATION SOME OF OUR REGIONS WHICH HAVE GOOD ECONOMIC POTENTIAL. ONE HAS ONLY TO LOOK AT THE GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION OF UPPER VOLTA TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE THAT WE GIVE TO PUTTING AN END TO ISOLATION. SOME OF THE SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT INDICATED ON THE LIST CAN ALSO HELP US TO REINFORCE MEDICAL SERVICES FOR OUR POPULATION, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS VERY POORLY EQUIPPED HEALTHWISE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OUAGAD 04039 161706Z

THE HEALTH SERVICES OF THE ARMED FORCES, BETTER EQUIPPED, CAN MOST CERTAINLY RENDER ENORMOUS SERVICES AT A LOWER COST, IN THIS SOCIAL ASPECT OF DEVELOPMENT. IT IS CLEAR THAT SOME OF THE EQUIPMENT CAN ONLY HAVE A MILITARY USE. THIS IS TRUE, BUT WE MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT THE PROBLEM MUST BE CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE. MY FIRST PREOCCUPATION IS TO GIVE TO THE VOLTAN ARMY THE MEANS TO INSPIRE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE POPULATION WHOSE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY THEY HAVE TO GUARANTEE, STAYING, HOWEVER, WITHIN THE REASONABLE LIMITS COMPATIBLE WITH OUR PROJECTS FOR THE FUTURE. THOSE MEANS MUST BE CONSIDERED AT THE LEVEL OF EQUIPMENT ALLOWING THE ARMY TO PROTECT THE POPULATION AGAINST ANY LAND OR AIRBORNE ATTACK. THEY ALSO HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AT THE LEVEL OF INDIVIDUAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE REASON THAT IF THE SIGHT OF A SOLDIER IN RAGS NEVER REASSURES THE POPULATION WHO ASSOCIATES THIS WITH DEFEAT, IT WOULD EVEN LESS DISCOURAGE A POSSIBLE ENEMY.

MR. AMBASSADOR, YOUR INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IS WELL ENOUGH INFORMED ON THE MILITARY POTENTIAL OF OUR NEIGHBORS FOR ME TO BE ABLE TO COUNT ON THE HELP AND UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR GOVERNMENT.

I WOULD MOSTLY APPRECIATE YOUR APPROACHING YOUR GOVERNMENT TO OBTAIN:

-A GRACIOUS GRANT OF MATERIALS LISTED IN ANNEX 1
- A PARTIAL GIFT OR ACQUISITION FACILITIES FOR THE OTHER MATERIALS, MACHINES AND EQUIPMENT AS A LOAN UNDER MANAGEABLE CONDITIONS.

THE HEAD OF THE COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF LOGISTICS PROBLEMS WHO IS ALREADY IN CONTACT WITH YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT YOU MAY REQUIRE. UNQUOTE.

3. ANNEX 1 OF LETTER IS LIST OF PERSONAL ITEMS RANGING FROM SOCKS TO UNDERWEAR AND UNIFORMS TO TENTS, BEDS AND FIELD KITCHENS FOR APPROXIMATELY 12,000 MEN.

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PAGE 04 OUAGAD 04039 161706Z

4. ANNEX II IS LIST OF JEEPS (50), LIGHT TRUCKS (150), HEAVY TRUCKS (100), AND AMBULANCES (20).

5. ANNEX III LISTS ONE C-130 AIRCRAFT, 200 PARACHUTES FOR TROOPS, AND 50 PARACHUTES FOR EQUIPMENT.

6. ANNEXES IV AND V RESPECTIVELY CONTAIN LISTS OF THE SIMPLEST ANTI-AIRCRAFT AND ANTI-TANK WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION. IT WILL BE NOTICED THAT ALL EQUIPMENT REQUESTED IS DEFENSIVE IN NATURE.

7. MAJOR DAKOURE WILL BRING COMPLETE LIST WITH HIM WHEN HE CALLS AT DEPARTMENT MORNING DECEMBER 20.

8. COMMENT: THE REQUEST FOR A GRANT OF THE ITEMS IN ANNEX I IS A SURPRISE TO US. WHEN WE TALKED WITH MAJOR DAKOURE HE ONLY SPOKE OF SALES AND CREDITS.

9. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THE LIST IS A REALISTIC COMPILATION OF VOLTAN NEEDS. THE ACCENT DEFINITELY IS ON THE BASIC EQUIPPING OF A SIMPLE INFANTRY ARMY. THERE ARE NO TANKS ON THE LIST, AND EVEN THE 105MM AMMUNITION, MENTIONED IN REFTTEL, DOES NOT APPEAR.

10. THE C-130 OF COURSE IS EXPENSIVE. AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS AN ITEM THEY HAVE A STRONG WISH FOR. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY AT THIS POINT WHETHER IT WILL REMAIN ON THE LIST AS THEY GET FURTHER INTO THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PACKAGE. VOLTANS REALIZE, OF COURSE, THAT SUCH AIRCRAFT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE FROM FACTORY FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS.
GRAHAM

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